manufacture of vanaspati has been withdrawn from 6.7.1990.

(vi) The supplies of imported edible oils through Public Distribution System have been stepped up from 35,200 tonnes in March, 1990 to 70,000 tonnes in July, 1990. National Dairy Development Board has also been authorised to undertake judicious market intervention with the imported oil and domestic oil procured by them.

**Supply of essential items at fixed prices throughout the country**

*76. PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a demand that the Union Government should take the responsibility for supplying to the people at fixed prices within the reach of the common man 14 articles of daily consumption throughout the country;

(b) if so, whether Government have any such scheme under its consideration; and

(c) if not, whether there is any alternative scheme to mitigate the hard-ship of the people from the unbridled price rise?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Central Government is already supplying key essential commodities like wheat, rice, levy sugar, kerosene, imported edible oils and soft coke to the State/UTs for distribution through Public Distribution System

The Central Government is incurring a huge subsidy of over Rs. 2000 crores per annum for supply of rice and wheat through PDS. Substantial relief is provided to consumers through supply of the other items also.

Due to financial and administrative constraints, it is not feasible to include more items under PDS at the National level. States and UTs have been advised from time to time to consider inclusion of some items of mass consumption relevant to their area for distribution if necessary by using the PDS outlets.

**Laws for Welfare of Beedi Workers**

*77. SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI: DR. RATNAKAR PANDEY:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had recently convened a meeting to review the problems of beedi workers and enforcement of laws for their welfare; and

(b) if so, the details and outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND WELFARE (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) A meeting was held on the 3rd July, 1990 under the Chairmanship of Union Labour Minister to discuss and review various issues concerning beedi workers. The meeting was attended by the representatives of employers, employees and the State Governments. Apart from certain suggestions for further examination of existing laws concerning Beedi workers, the other salient points that emerged for further action were as follows:—

(1) State Governments to undertake a Special drive to cover all identified beedi workers in their States through local bodies such as Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samities, Municipalities, etc., and issue identity cards,

(2) Tripartite Committees to be constituted by State Governments to standardise the quantity of raw material to be issued to beedi workers for making a given number of beedis of different sizes;

(3) State Governments to suitably amend the Beedi & Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Rules to make provisions for the return of rejected beedis free of cost to beedi workers;

(4) All provident fund arrears on account of employers contributions should be paid by 31st December, 1990, failing which cases should be launched against employers for depositing not only their own contribution but also the share of employees.

**Additional Supply of rice and wheat to West Bengal**

*78. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether a request was recently received from West Bengal Government for an additional supply of rice and wheat for its public distribution system;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to meet their requirements?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI NATHU RAM MIRDHA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government of West Bengal had requested for enhancement of their monthly allocation of rice from 69,000 tonnes to 95,000 tonnes and that of wheat from 90,000 to 1,08,000 tonnes per month and for a special allotment of 10,000 tonnes of rice for Puja Festival.

(c) The rice allocation to the State has been enhanced to 74,000 tonnes per month from August, 1990. The request for additional allocation of 10,000 tonnes of rice for the Puja festival has also been agreed to.

**Losses suffered by the Public Sector Fertilizer Units**

*79. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: SHRI ISH DUTT YADAV:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what was the percentage of rise in the losses suffered by the public sector fertilizer units in the country in 1989-90 (unitwise) and what is the accumulated loss as against the loss-profit during 1988-89; and

(b) what are the reasons for the continuous losses and the manner in which Government propose to make the public sector fertilize units economically viable?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI UPENDRA NATH VERMA): (a) The percentage of variation (increase/decrease) in losses by the public sector units during 1989-90 and accumulated losses as against the loss-